

Mary

by dontfindmeiamgone

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Summary: A survivor has an unexpected encounter on the beach. One shot.

Mary

Mary was sitting on the edge of the pier. The pier had collapsed years ago; she could tell from the weathering of the broken wood. She picked at the splintering timber as Roxie skittered around and poked at the sand along the water's edge.

Mary had been about 35 when the earth had surrendered. Her hair hadn't turned to grey yet, she had a husband, a daughter, a job, a sister, parents— an average human life.

Mary looked out at the water and tucked a strand of grey-streaked blonde hair behind her ear. She had always loved the coast. Only a few weeks ago she had finally made her way back to it.

For almost 20 years, she had been struggling within the interior of the country. She and her family had scavenged supplies and killed, when they had to, all the while hiding from the overpowering force of the Combine. They had fared pretty well for a long time. But a couple months ago, when they had met up with another group of survivors, everything went downhill. The camp was larger than any other they had come across before. That's how the striders found them. There were too many buildings and too few trees to conceal them. Both her husband and her sister had been killed. Her and her daughter and a few others were the only ones that had escaped.

Mary and her daughter decided that the coast was the best place for them to go. Their family had owned a house there once— a small cottage on the beach. Her daughter had spent the first few of her summers in the cottage, every year up until The Black Mesa Incident, and she thought that it was isolated enough that maybe nobody would find them there. She was wrong.

A gunship spotted them one day, scrambling around the rocks trying to collect pheropods from a dead antlion guardian that had been shot and killed the day before. Her daughter was hit by a Combine bullet and was dead before Mary had a chance to get to her. That was two weeks ago today.

Mary watched as Roxie poked and growled at a sea leach that she had managed to grab and pull out of the water. Mary squeezed the bug bait in her hand and Roxie scurried over to her. She reached out slowly and touched the creature.

Roxie had been one of the first antlions that she summoned with the pheropods collected the day her daughter died. Roxie was also the only antlion that had consistently survived the intermittent gun ship attacks over the last 14 days and she had been lingering around Mary ever since that first day. Mary hoped that Roxie had grown to feel affection for her as she patted the insect-like head. Deep down she knew better, though; she was only there for the bug bait. Nevertheless, Mary had named her after her daughter, Roxanne. She stood up to return to the small cave under the base of the pier. She hadn't slept in the cottage for a whileâ€¦

As she turned she saw a figure approaching her. It was armed. She glanced toward the three boxes of supplies that lay under the pier. She had dragged them down from the cottage only yesterday. The figure must have spotted them; it was walking directly towards her.

Mary squeezed the bug bait again and hurried towards the cave, Roxie right behind her. The figure was close now; she could see that it was a human male and not a combine soldier. But from experience, Mary knew that being human did not necessarily make this man a friend. The figure continued towards her.

Mary raised her arm and threw the pheropod at the man, hitting him in the chest with the smelly substance. Roxie charged. Then, Mary noticed the man was wearing armor. She gasped as Roxie clawed with futility at the metal of the armor, only being able to knock the man off his feet without causing any real damage. She dropped to the ground and scrambled to find another pheropod to call Roxie back with.

"Wait! I'll call her-" she yelled.

A shot rang out. Roxie screeched and fell to the ground.

Another few antlions smelled the bait and they rushed out of the sand and attacked the man. Mary covered her face and listened as three more shots echoed across the beach. She cowered in the cave and peeked through her fingers, watching as the man walked towards her.

"Just take them!" she croaked, waving towards the boxes.

The man walked past the crates and up to the entrance to the cave. He held out his hand to her.

"No! You killed her! Get away from me! Just take the crates and go!"

The man withdrew his hand, and looked at her with puzzled eyes. There

was a small spray of green antlion goo on his glasses.

"They killed my family! I was all alone except for Roxie, and now you killed her, too!"

The man's eyebrows furrowed. He looked back at the antlion corpses. Slowly, he looked back at her.

Suddenly, Mary realized who she was looking at. The suit, the glasses, the guns. Gordon Freeman. \_Gordon Freeman. \_She had heard that name before. The soldiers in the gunship had said that name; she heard it when the ship had swooped low to the beach, narrowly missing her hiding under a huge piece of driftwood as her daughter bled out on the sand.

"You." Mary whispered.

Gordon's eyebrows raised, his grip on the shotgun tightened instinctively.

"My daughter! You killed her. THEY were looking for YOU. YOU KILLED MY DAUGHTER. YOU KILLED ROXANNE."

Gordon stepped back, a look of horror consuming his face.

"And you're out of ammo aren't you? Or you will be soon. That's why you came over here. You saw my crates. Can't shoot too many more of THEM can you!" Mary's eyes were wide with rage as she violently motioned towards the antlion corpses.

Gordon's mouth dropped open in surprise.

Mary turned around quickly and grabbed two pheropods out of a box in the back of the cave. Gordon stepped away. She raised one above her head and stepped towards him. She went to throw it at him but her arm hesitated. Suddenly, tears poured from her eyes.

"Oh God! Why? They're deadâ€¦ everyone! My daughter, my husband, everyone. Even my Roxieâ€¦ DEAD. All deadâ€¦ I'm all alone here nowâ€¦" she cried, clutching the bug bait to her chest.

Gordon froze.

"Here." She stepped towards him and viciously shoved one into his hand.

Gordon stared at it for a moment. He looked up at her. She was holding the pheropod to her face with her eyes closed; she had stopped crying but the sobbing breaths continued. He reached his arm out and touched her shoulder.

"It's not your faultâ€¦" he said quietly.

Her eyes snapped open.

"No, Mr. Freeman, you're right. It's not my fault. It's \_your\_ fault, isn't it? Alllll this," she gestured at the beach, her words pouring out of her mouth like ice water, "all this is \_your\_ fault. Everyone I know is dead from something YOU did. I know all about that little incident at Black Mesa, everyone does! You are the cause for all of

this. YOU are the one that let THEM find us. Now take the supplies and get the fuck away from me."

The color washed out from his face. Quickly, he turned and smashed the boxes with his crowbar and took the ammo from them. Without looking at her, he hurried away down the beach.

Mary looked down at the pheropod and smiled with madness in her eyes.

"I don't want to be alone anymoreâ€|" she whispered to herself and she crushed the pod in her hand and smeared the contents across her chest.

Gordon turned when he heard her scream, but it was too late.

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file.